

'Blueprint' for Forced Labour

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Former president of Democratic Kampuchea Khieu Samphan was obsessively determined to implement the radical economic policies of his doctoral thesis, civil party lawyers at the Khmer Rouge tribunal said yesterday.

Khieu Samphan's 1959 thesis Cambodia's Economy and Industrial Development provided a blueprint for the forced-labour projects of the Khmer Rouge regime that have been characterized as crimes against humanity and provided the political and economic reasoning to support enslaving the population, civil party lawyers attempted to demonstrate yesterday.

"[Khieu Samphan] was obsessively determined to put the contents of his thesis into practice," civil party lawyer Olivier Bahougne told the court yesterday.

The prosecution and civil parties this week have been highlighting documents they view as relevant to the historical context of the Khmer Rouge prior to the April 17, 1975, takeover of Phnom Penh and subsequent evacuation of the city's population, which is the key subject matter of the first mini-trial in Case 002 against the three surviving senior leaders of Democratic Kampuchea.

Like the other leaders, Khieu Samphan studied in Paris in the 1950s, where he is alleged to have fallen in with radical leftist student groups.

The Khmer Rouge's own economic principles greatly reflect the former nominal head of state's thesis, civil party lawyers said yesterday, adding that this demonstrated the "high degree of political implication of Khieu Samphan" in the policies of the Khmer Rouge.

In audio-visual footage presented by civil party lawyers yesterday, Khieu Samphan also claimed it was he who was instrumental in bringing then-Prince Norodom Sihanouk into an alliance with the Khmer Rouge.

An intellectual, Khieu Samphan also served in the government under Sihanouk for a brief period before being ejected for his leftist ideals.

Khieu Samphan's legal counsel raised a "grave" translation issue concerning a document raised by the co-prosecutors.

"The translation of this document has grave issues as to the reputation of the former

king,” counsel Kong Sam Onn said, adding that a translated version of the document appeared to implicate now-King Father Norodom Sihanouk in ordering the executions of two prominent Khmer Rouge leaders, Hu Nim and Hou Yuon in 1977.